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Nomadic workers find home on the Net

E-BIZ

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I haven't had a salaried job for almo eight years. Like me, many entrepr neurs don't have a steady, guarantee income and aren't sure what they'll b doing in six months to earn a living.

This reality is typical of what many in th work force face as the 21st century unfold We are entering a jobless economy.

What's developing is an economy of co sultants — nomadic workers, if you lik Those who work out of a small office/hom office are the vanguard of a significan structural change to the work force.

What does this have to do with techno ogy? Quite a bit — the Internet is laying th foundation for an economy in which growing number of nomadic workers w serve clients far beyond their local ge graphic area. It's an economy in whic part-time or contract work will become th norm, rather than the exception.

Many large organizations are reluctant hire full-time staff, not wanting to pay p tentially huge severance packages if jobs have to be cut in the future. They worry that the next time there is a recession, it will cost a fortune to downsize. Not only that, but many companies realize they only need certain skills for a short period.

Both factors have led to an increasing re liance on part-time or contract workers. There has also been a seismic shift in many entrepreneurs' attitude toward work. So many were rightsized, re-engineered and re-organized in the nineties that they have little corporate loyalty and prefer to be responsible for themselves.

Many people took their severance package and decided they would rather be self-employed. The result has been an explosion in the number who contract out their skills and talents to the corporate sector on an as-needed basis.

We've got the perfect situation where companies need a lot of part-time help, and a large group of people fit the mould.

Where does the Internet come in? It is the technology that links the corporate sector, hungry for needed skills, and the part-time worker eager to provide them.

It gives the nomadic worker the opportunity to post an on-line résumé to market their talents to a potential global audience in search of them. It allows them to instantly communicate with existing and potential clients via E-mail. It also provides resources they can use to constantly enhance and upgrade their skills.

You only need to scan at the careers section in a newspaper for an idea of where the economy is headed as this structural change occurs. Take a look at careers in the information technology sector — it is probably fair to say that the majority of the positions available are on a contract basis.

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